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**KYRGYZ REPUBLIC**

## SUCCESS STORY

# First Aid Saves Child's Life

### Feldsher Training Increases Access to Quality Care and Saves Lives



Photo: ZdravPlus

*The Feldsher Training Program emphasizes practicing new skills.*

*One day in the future, all of the newly trained feldshers in Kyrgyzstan undoubtedly will have a story like Damira's to tell – of a life saved and an eternally grateful mother.*

One-year-old Aidana had been sick for a while. Aileta, her mother, thought it was simply a cold. But then something changed...early one morning, the child developed a high temperature. Aidana's breathing appeared to stop and she became unconscious and pale. Panicked, Aileta quickly called the ambulance. The closest children's hospital was 15 minutes away.

Damira, an ambulance feldsher—or medic—who recently completed a USAID-funded training course in basic emergency care, was in the back with mother and child. Damira knew she had to do something to save Aidana – and quickly. Holding the child on her lap, she swiftly assessed the girl's condition and realized that she was not breathing and had no pulse. Remembering what she had learned in the course, she started CPR. After a few cycles, the child started to breathe by herself. Her pulse was still weak, but palpable. But the child's body was cold and shivering. When Damira wrapped the child in her jacket, Aidana's condition improved rapidly; she regained consciousness, began to cry, and her skin color changed from pale to rosy.

A few weeks later, at her follow-up visit, Aidana was doing very well and her mother struggled to adequately express her gratitude to the feldsher for her help. Damira was very happy that she was able to save Aidana's life. When asked what she would have done in a similar situation before the seminar, Damira replied, "Nothing, because I simply would not have known what to do."

Expatriate doctors and nurses provided on-the-ground technical expertise to design and implement the USAID and World Bank co-funded training program. With assistance from the Kyrgyz State Medical Institute for Retraining and Continuing Medical Education, 22 feldshers working in ambulances and medical posts were selected from around the country. They received four weeks of emergency medical care education, followed by an additional five months of specialized primary care training. The feldshers then went on to participate in training and received their diplomas, becoming the first feldshers in Central Asia to be granted permission to teach. With USAID support, these trainers went on to teach 313 ambulance feldshers and 300 medical point feldshers on emergency care and management of childhood illnesses.